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Apostolic Trip of His Holiness Francis in Ireland for the World Meeting of Families in Dublin (25-26 August 2018) – Visit to the Day Centre for homeless families of the Capuchin Fathers

After leaving Saint Mary's Pro-Cathedral, the Holy Father Francis transferred by popemobile to the Day Centre for homeless families, managed by the Capuchin Fathers.

Upon arrival, Pope Francis was received at the side entrance of the soup kitchen by ten Capuchin Fathers who manage the Centre. Employees and volunteers were present in the courtyard, and there were around one hundred people assisted by the Centre in the dining area.

After listening to the greeting from the Director of the Centre, Frate Kevin Crowley, the Holy Father made some extemporaneous remarks expressing his thanks and appreciation for the work of the Capuchin Fathers, and then directly addressed the guests of the centre, thanking them for the trust they place in the Capuchin Fathers and in the Day Centre. Before imparting his blessing and bidding farewell to those present, the Pope invited all to share in a moment of silent prayer.

At the end the Pope returned to the nunciature, where he met privately with a representation from the community of Irish Jesuits.

The following are the Pope's off-the-cuff comments made during his visit to the Capuchin Fathers' Day Centre:

Words of the Holy Father

Dear brother, dear bishop, dear Capuchin brothers,

and all of you, my brothers and sisters!

You [the Capuchin Brother who welcomed the Holy Father] said that the Capuchins are known as the Brothers

of the People, close to the people, and this is true. If at times, some Capuchin community goes distant from the people of God, it falls. You are especially attuned with people of God, and indeed, with the poor. You have the grace of contemplating the wounds of Jesus in those in need, those who suffer, those who are unfortunate or destitute, or full of vices and defects. For you this is the flesh of Christ. This is your witness and the Church needs it. Thank you.

One more thing and then [turning to the poor] I will speak to you. Another thing that you said touched my heart. That you don't ask any questions. It is Jesus who comes [in the poor]. You ask no questions. You accept life as it comes, you give comfort and, if need be, you forgive. This makes me think – as a reproof - of those priests who instead live by asking questions about other people's lives and who in confession dig, dig, dig into consciences. Your witness teaches priests to listen, to be close, to forgive and not to ask too many questions. To be simple, as Jesus said that father did who, when his son returned, full of sins and vices. That father did not sit in a confessional and start asking question after question. He accepted the son's repentance and embraced him. May your witness to the people of God, and this heart capable of forgiving without causing pain, reach all priests. Thank you!

And you, dear brothers and sisters, I thank you for the love and the trust that you have for the Capuchin brothers. Thank you because you come here with trust! Let me say one thing to you. Do you know why you come here with trust? Because they help you without detracting from your dignity. For them, each of you is Jesus Christ. Thank you for the trust that you give us. You are the Church, you are God's people. Jesus is with you. They will give you the things you need, but listen to the advice they give you; they will always give you good advice. And if you have something, some doubt, some hurt, talk to them and they will give you good advice. You know that they love you: otherwise, this Centre would not exist. Thank you for your trust. And one last thing. Pray! Pray for the Church. Pray for priests. Pray for the Capuchins. Pray for the bishops, for your bishop. Pray for me too... I allow myself to ask all this. Pray for priests, don't forget .

Thank you so much! Now, each of you, think in your heart of all those who are dear to you, because I will also bless them, you and them. And another thing: if any of you has an enemy or anyone you dislike, think of them too, and they will also receive the blessing.

God bless you all, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Thank you very much.
